

IN THE WORKS

TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON

March 2004

INSIDE IN THE WORKS:

Contracting rules: Comments received, rules adopted.....	1
Bargaining moves forward.....	2
Preparing for the new computer system.....	3
Getting to the point: Civil service rules made clear	4
Performance must be measured and rewarded fairly.....	4



CONTRACTING RULES: COMMENTS RECEIVED, RULES ADOPTED

General Administration formally adopted final competitive contracting rules on March 17 and filed them with the state code revisor's office. That office will publish the rules on April 7. General Administration will then share the rules with all stakeholders.

The rules take effect July 1, 2005. Competitive contracting will remove the prohibition against the contracting of services "traditionally and historically provided by state employees."

More than 800 stakeholders were involved in developing the rules over a six-month period. Of the 350 comments received during a six-week public comment period, 60 percent came from state employees. Labor organizations submitted the next-largest amount – 25 percent. Although hundreds of comments were provided, none resulted in substantive changes.

"We are pleased by that, but not surprised," said Rob Fukai, director of General Administration. "We're not surprised because of the effort GA expended to include stakeholders in the rules process. We were able to avoid conflicts and issues that could have derailed the process."

A summary of the comments will be posted on the General Administration web site on April 7, the start of a 60-day period in which interested parties may ask for reconsideration of the rules or appeal them.

Key Issue

A key issue that surfaced concerned employee business units. The question: Could employees use state resources while preparing a bid during competitive contracting? The state's Executive Ethics Board concluded that state workers may use state resources when preparing a bid during competitive contracting, as long as they follow General Administration's rules for employee business units.

Next Steps

The next step for General Administration is to work with the Department of Personnel to develop training for state agencies and employees about various aspects of the rules. The instruction is scheduled to begin next fall. General Administration is also working on a contracting manual that will be designed to help guide state agencies and employees through the process. Find more information at: <http://www.ga.wa.gov/competitivecontracting/index.html>. ★

VIEW PAST ISSUES: FEB 2004 | JAN 2004 | DEC 2003 | OCT 2003 | AUG 2003

In the Works is an electronic newsletter home-based at the *Washington Works* website: www.washingtonworks.wa.gov

BARGAINING MOVES FORWARD

Collective bargaining between Washington State government and its union employees got underway in February beginning with the Washington Federation of State Employees.

The state's management bargaining team received a proposal from the Federation bargaining team in late February.

Last week, the state's management bargaining team responded with its proposal.

The state's Labor Relations Office also will begin bargaining with the other union teams. Currently, the Labor Relations Office is scheduling dates to meet with each union for initial discussions.

"I look forward to getting negotiations underway with all of the unions," said Gary Moore, the state's chief negotiator.

The Process

Under terms of the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002, the state will negotiate a master agreement with each of the six unions that represent more than 500 employees.

A seventh master agreement will be negotiated with a coalition of unions that represent fewer than 500 employees each.

Each master agreement will apply to all agencies with employees represented by the union involved in the agreement.

State colleges and universities had the opportunity to choose to negotiate their own contracts with union-represented employees or have the state perform that function.

The Labor Relations Office will represent all community colleges except Yakima Valley Community College. The Evergreen State College also will rely on the office, but other four-year colleges and universities will negotiate their own contracts with labor unions.

MASTER AGREEMENTS

The Labor Relations office will negotiate a master agreement with each union that represents 500 or more employees in general government. Those unions are:

- ★ Washington Federation of State Employees, AFSCME Council 28
- ★ Washington Public Employees Association, UFCW, Local 365
- ★ International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 17
- ★ Service Employees International Union, Local 1199 NW
- ★ Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 313
- ★ United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1001

All other unions—those representing fewer than 500 bargaining unit employees—will form a coalition to negotiate a single master agreement. Those unions are:

- ★ Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 524
- ★ International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 76
- ★ Washington State Patrol Communication Managers Association
- ★ Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 32
- ★ International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
- ★ Washington Association of Professional Biologists
- ★ Washington State Nurses Association
- ★ Commercial Vehicle Officer 4 Association

The Result

Negotiated collective bargaining agreements are due to the Office of Financial Management by October 1, so they can be incorporated in the governor's 2005-07 budget proposal, which will be considered by the Legislature starting in January 2005.

The Legislature will have the role of approving or rejecting the cost of the negotiated agreements during its 2005 legislative session. If the cost proposal is rejected, that would trigger a return to negotiations or the union could request mediation.

The new contracts are scheduled to take effect July 1, 2005. ★

PREPARING FOR THE NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM

The state's new Human Resource Management System (HRMS) is on schedule for use this coming January.

The new computer system is based on a purchased software package that has all of the basic human resource functions built in to it. The software is very flexible and has a lot of options for designing a system that fits the specific needs of Washington State government.

The design of the system and preparations for getting it up and running have involved lots of help and feedback from agency staff. In February, agencies evaluated what they need to do to get ready for the new computer system, and how much staff time it's going to take to get it all done.

Agency data is being cleaned up to help make sure that information passed over to the new system is in good shape. For example: Are names, addresses, anniversary dates, etc. all complete and accurate?

Agencies also are completing a technology survey to find out if they are properly equipped to interact with the new system, and the HRMS team is developing plans to train the people who will use the system.

The first version of the new system, ready for use in January 2005, will include all of the basic functions needed to pay state employees and maintain personnel records. Additional functions will be added in the fall of 2005.

More information about HRMS is available on the project web site at <http://hrms.dop.wa.gov>.

GETTING TO THE POINT: NEW CIVIL SERVICE RULES MADE CLEAR

The Department of Personnel (DOP) is using the opportunity of civil service reform to not only streamline and simplify the civil service rules, but also to improve the format and clarity of the writing.

In recent months, DOP has consulted with a clear-writing specialist and conducted usability testing in order to improve the way the rules are written and presented. The result is a new question-and-answer format that was first used on the layoff and separation rules published last month, and the performance management rules posted March 17.

The following example helps illustrate the change. Under the current layoff rule, the answer to how much layoff notice must be given is buried in the long convoluted sentence on the left. Under the new draft rules, the answer is clear and easy to find.

CURRENT RULE	DRAFT RULE
WAC 356-30-330 Reduction in force—Reasons, regulations—Procedure. (1) Employees may be separated in accordance with the statutes and the agencies' approved reduction in force procedures after at least fifteen calendar days' notice in writing, without prejudice, because of lack of funds or curtailment of work, or good faith reorganization for efficiency purposes, ineligibility to continue in a position which has been reallocated, or when there are fewer positions than there are employees entitled to such positions either by statute or within other provisions of merit system rules.	WAC 357-52-025 How much layoff notice do employers need to give employees? (1) Probationary employees being separated due to layoff must receive one (1) calendar day's notice. (See WAC 357-52-120) (2) Permanent employees being laid off must receive fifteen (15) calendar days' notice before the effective date of the layoff.

"We hope these changes will make it easier for human resource professionals, employees and supervisors at every level to look at the rules and interpret them easily and accurately," said Gene Matt, director of the Department of Personnel. ★

PERFORMANCE MUST BE MEASURED AND REWARDED FAIRLY

Civil service reform provides agencies and higher education institutions the opportunity to consider performance as a factor in pay and layoff actions. With that opportunity comes the responsibility to make sure that performance measures are applied fairly and equitably.

"Employees need to know what's expected of them and how their performance will be measured. And they deserve to be rewarded fairly when they contribute to the success of the organization," according to Mark Andrews, assistant director with the Department of Personnel.

Draft rules covering performance management and disciplinary action are now available for comment at the [Department of Personnel's website](#). Employees may provide feedback online, through email, or through their human resource office. The comment period runs through April 13.

VIEW PAST ISSUES: FEB 2004 | JAN 2004 | DEC 2003 | OCT 2003 | AUG 2003

To provide safeguards for employees, DOP is developing a performance management confirmation process that agencies or institutions must complete before they can elect to use performance as a factor in pay or layoff decisions.

DOP is putting together a 10-point checklist, tools and resources, and a three-step process to ensure that the organization pursuing confirmation has plans and processes in place that address everything from funding performance-based pay to management accountability and measuring success. ★

Have feedback on this issue of IN THE WORKS? Email it to washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov

*Check out the new look of the WASHINGTON WORKS web site!
Let us know how you like it using the online [feedback form](#).*

VIEW PAST ISSUES: FEB 2004 | JAN 2004 | DEC 2003 | OCT 2003 | AUG 2003

In the Works is an electronic newsletter home-based at the Washington Works website: www.washingtonworks.wa.gov